



FOURTH MICHIGAN VOLUNTEER INFANTRY REGIMENT



Defend It!

*The history of your regiment is the history of our Michigan regiments. I believe not one of them has stained the proud name and enviable distinction of Michigan Soldiers. The memory of your battles, while they cover the living with glory, enshrine the noble dead in the deepest affections and the holiest memories of the human heart.*¹

Rev. F. A. Blades

Flag return ceremony July 4, 1864

Colonel Dwight A. Woodbury of Adrian assumed responsibility for recruiting and organizing the Fourth Michigan Volunteer Infantry Regiment, drawing volunteers from counties in the southern part of the state.² Like other regiments recruited early in the war, the Fourth was largely made up of existing militia units, including the Dexter Union Guard,³ the Grosvenor Union Guard, and the Tecumseh Volunteers.⁴ The regiment rendezvoused at Adrian, where it was mustered into service on June 20, 1861. The very next day, the new regiment gathered at Camp Williams on the grounds of Adrian College. Drawn up in a large hollow square, over one thousand volunteers in full uniform stood sweating at attention in the dust and sweltering heat. They were about to receive their regimental colors.⁵

Special trains had been running since dawn, bringing visitors from Detroit and neighboring towns. According to newspaper accounts, by 2:30 no less than nine to ten thousand people crowded the parade grounds to watch the solemn event. Many



Colonel Dwight A. Woodbury





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dignitaries attended including the Honorable Zachariah Chandler, Michigan's powerful United States Senator.⁶

The banner the regiment was about to receive was unique. A handsome silk national flag ([SC-10-90](#)), it bore the sequined challenge:

THE LADIES OF ADRIAN
TO THE
4TH REGIMENT
Defend It

The words had been carefully applied to the flag by hand – probably one of the “Ladies of Adrian” herself – by sewing a double line of gold braid to form hollow block and script letters filled with sequins.

Today sadly faded, in 1861 the sequins must have sparkled in the hot afternoon sun. The staff was an expensive one, surmounted by an elegant gilt globe and eagle.⁷

Mrs. Josephine S. Wilcox organized the effort to procure this flag for the regiment. She stepped forward on a small platform placed in the center of the square to present the flag to Colonel Woodbury. In a clear, carrying voice she asked the regiment to heed the banner's motto, saying:

When you follow this standard in your line of march or on the field of battle, and you see it waving in lines of beauty, and gleams of brightness, remember the trust we have placed in your hands . . . we love this glorious

banner; let the Atlantic winds unfurl it, let the Pacific breezes caress it, let it float over the everglades of Florida and the prairies of the northwest, at the golden gate of California, and on the mountains of Maine. The eagle of American liberty . . . swoops down on spreading pinions . . . she has perched on this banner which we now give to your keeping.⁸



The sequined motto on the Fourth's presentation flag (SC-10-90) is hard to read in this photograph, but is clearly visible when viewing the actual flag.



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Colonel Woodbury accepted the flag replying:

To whatever position the officers of the State, under God, may assign us, with our banner to cheer us, we will strive to do our duty as American soldiers. It has defended us; - it will defend. To no inferior force shall it ever be surrendered, and sooner than be trailed to treason it shall become the pall of the regiment.⁹

Losing little time, the new regiment quickly marched off to join the Army of the Potomac. The Fourth fought in almost every major battle of the Virginia campaign, eventually losing more men to wounds than disease, remarkable for regiments during the Civil War. The Fourth also lost three colonels – all killed in action – and the first was Colonel Dwight A. Woodbury.



This drawing by Alfred R. Ward depicts Union troops at the Battle of Malvern Hill.

On July 1, 1862, the Fourth was engaged at Malvern Hill in Virginia. Forced down the Virginia Peninsula during seven days of hard fighting, the Fourth stood firm while other regiments scrambled for cover. Colonel Woodbury ran out among the retreating troops and, waving his cap in one hand and his sword in the other, tried to rally the men with shouts of encouragement. Suddenly, he was struck in the head by a musket ball.¹⁰ One source claims his last words were for his troops, "Good-bye boys."¹¹ Other sources refute this claim. In his book, *Michigan in the War*, Adjutant General John Robertson repeats the account of David Chamberlain, surgeon for the Fourth:

"At this moment he was pierced in the forehead by a musket ball. He threw up his arms and fell back dead. His countenance in death appeared calm but earnest. His under lip was clasped under his upper teeth, a habit of his life, indicating his earnestness of purpose."¹²

The Fourth was devastated. The regiment had lost its beloved colonel and forty others. Approximately one hundred were wounded and another thirty-two were missing.¹³ Although the regiment's beautiful flag was torn to tatters, it was not surrendered. The Fourth had kept its promise.

The regiment, however, needed a new flag. Robert Campbell, the Fourth's quartermaster, recalled in 1902: "In the campaigns of 1861 and 1862 the first flag which had been presented to the regiment by the ladies of Adrian had become very much worn and literally riddled with bullets and the flag-staff broken. It was decided that it should be sent home to Michigan as a relic and a new flag procured."¹⁴



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Obtaining a new flag must have proven more difficult than the regiment expected. In January 1863, this letter appeared in the *Adrian Daily Watchtower*:

The Tattered Flag of the Fourth Regiment, An Appeal to the Ladies

Mrs. W. S. Wilcox: MADAM – I appeal to you in behalf of the 4th Michigan. The splendid set of colors presented by you to this regiment has just been exhibited to me by Col. Lumbard. I found it a complete wreck, pierced by innumerable bullets, battered and torn and no longer capable of being unfurled. A great desire was manifested by them to return it to you by me, that it might remain in your family, as a lasting memento of the bravery and determination of those gallant men who pledged you that it should never be dishonored. How well that promise has been kept, the well contested fields of Yorktown, New Bridge Hanover, Mechanicsville, Gaines Hill, Malvern Hill, Antietam and Fredericksburg will always be a testimony. Do not these gallant men deserve another flag to replace it. Shall they have it to say that the ladies of Adrian and of Michigan, have forgotten their self devotion, and their sufferings, whilst they are yet battling for their country, and for all that we hold sacred.

Hoping this appeal to you, and through you, to the ladies of Adrian will not be made in vain, - I am Truly Yours, J.Q. Drabbow.¹⁵

This appeal appears to have borne fruit, for the *Detroit Advertiser and Tribune* noted on February 10, 1863, that “The banner of the 4th Michigan Infantry, all torn into shreds by the shot and shell of the rebels in battle, has been returned to Adrian; and the firemen and citizens are raising funds to purchase a new flag for the brave boys of the 4th.”¹⁶

Besides a new flag, the Fourth also needed a colonel. Harrison H.

Jeffords, a recent graduate of the University of Michigan Law School, had joined the Fourth as an officer in the Dexter Union Guard. In late 1862, he became the regiment’s new commanding officer. Recognizing the regiment’s need for a new battle flag, and perhaps unwilling to wait any longer for a response from Adrian, in March 1863 he sent quartermaster Campbell to Washington:

Proceeding to department headquarters I was courteously received and was shown some of the finest flags and assisted in selecting one of the best. While carrying it through the streets of Washington on my return I was impressed more than ever with the charm which attended and was attached to ‘Old Glory.’ Some of the passers by would salute and raise their hats and the ladies would use such expressions as ‘God bless the soldier and the flag.’¹⁷



Colonel Harrison H. Jeffords

Since Campbell described this flag as “Old Glory,” it was likely the stars and stripes – a national flag – like the one it replaced. Drawn from



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military stores, however, it would have lacked the distinctive motto of a presentation flag.

Although evidence seems to indicate the regiment's old flag had been sent home by then, the matter is unclear. Colonel Jeffords, in an April 1863 letter evaluating the coming campaign season, wrote:

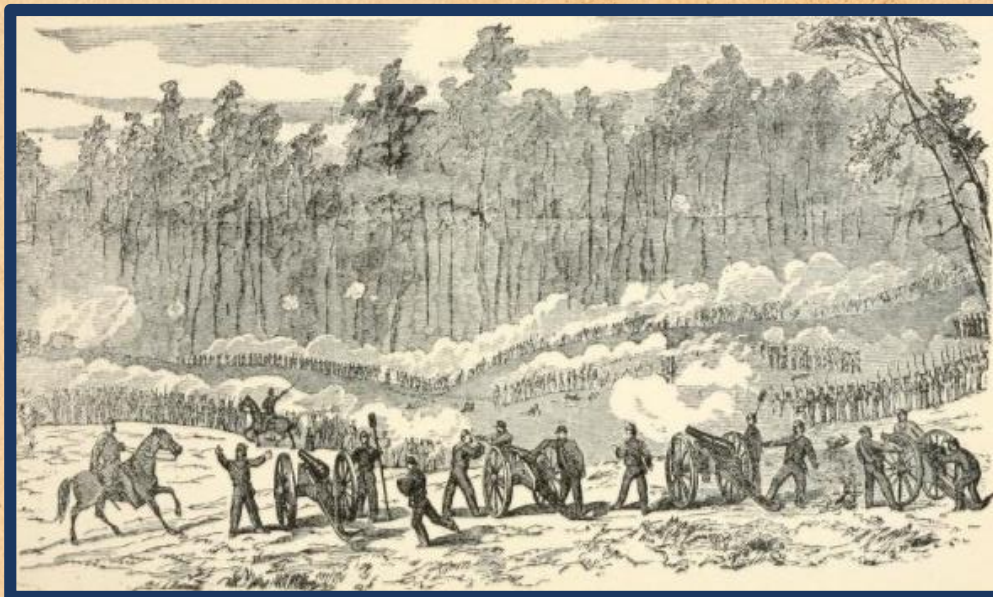
No holiday soldier or Provost Guard duty for us, but long marches, hard fighting, and all the privations of a soldier's life, will reduce our already thinned ranks, and leave hardly a fragment of Our Flag, now so tattered and torn as to leave nothing but silken rags, and a broken staff, with the motto 'Defend It,' pierced thro' and through with the enemies bullets.[18](#)

In any case, Campbell reported the "new banner was joyfully received by the members of the regiment" and was passed into service on May 1, 1863, when it was "first unfurled in battle at Chancellorsville."[19](#) It seems certain that the old flag had been sent home by then. Edward Taylor of company A, writing his sister Lottie after Chancellorsville, remarked on May 21st:

Speaking of flags – you should have seen the old flag of the 4th Mich. It has been sent home for safe keeping, as it was so torn and cut from shot and shell that it could not be carried. We have a new one now, but I think more of the old soiled flag we fought under on the Peninsula and in every battle till the last.[20](#)

Colonel Jeffords was extremely proud of his regiment's new flag, and – like Woodbury before him – pledged to protect it. In late May, Senator Chandler, along with Governor Blair and Mrs. Blair, visited the Michigan troops in the field. According to Campbell, "Col. Jeffords took especial delight in showing them the new flag and repeated his determination to be its especial guardian and defender."[21](#)

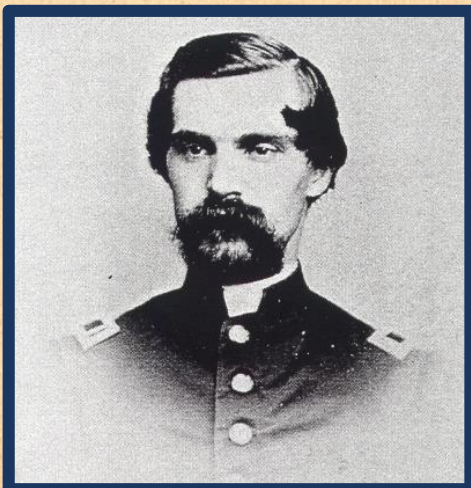
His opportunity came all too soon. On the afternoon of July 2, 1863, after an exhausting march, the Fourth arrived at Gettysburg. It was the second day of the savage three-day battle. Several hours after its arrival, the Fourth was



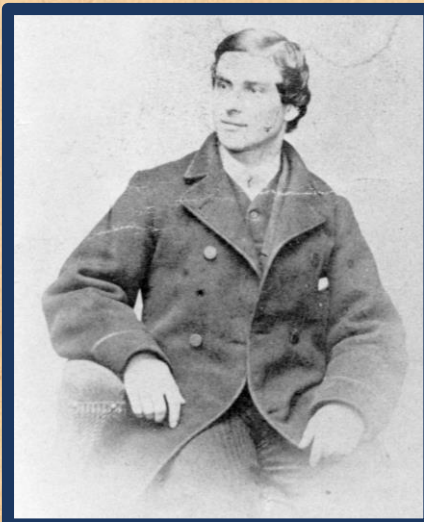
In the Wheatfield at Gettysburg



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Richard Seage



Henry Seage

engaged in an area today known as “the Wheatfield.” The fighting was chaotic and desperate as the Fourth was nearly surrounded. Those men who were not killed or captured were soon engaged in deadly hand-to-hand combat in their attempt to cut their way out of the firestorm.^{[22](#)}

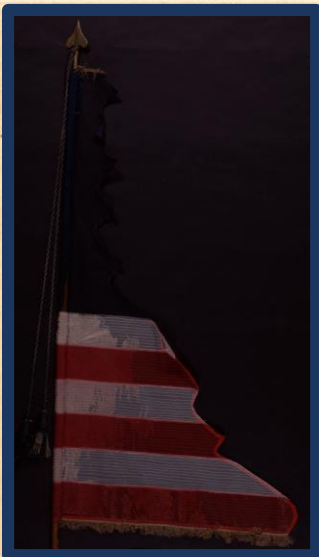
Some of the most brutal fighting took place around the colors. This is arguably one of the most well-known actions related to the defense of a Union battle flag during the entire war. Henry Seage, a member of the regiment, gave an account of the action in a letter written in 1884. He stated that the color bearer that day was Corporal Thomas Tarsney. “It is reported that . . . our color bearer Thos. Tarsney either surrendered or threw down the colors and ran.”^{[23](#)} He continued, “Colonel Jeffords seeing our colors (close by) in possession of the Rebs called on my brother (Richard Watson Seage) . . . To rescue the colors.”^{[24](#)} An unidentified Fourth Michigan officer whose account was published in Detroit stated that the colonel “cut down one or two in a melee around our colors.”^{[25](#)}

Henry Seage also wrote of the outcome of the battle “In the fight the colors were torn in shreds (what little remained) . . . And in the act of fighting the way out, Col. Jeffords was killed, by bayonet thrust through the body.”^{[26](#)} Other reputable accounts of soldiers who witnessed the fight stated that Jeffords was not killed immediately but mortally wounded, succumbing to his injury early the next morning – July 3, 1863.^{[27](#)}

In addition to Jeffords, several other members of the color company were wounded or killed during the intense fighting in and



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While **all** eyewitness accounts agree that the flag Jeffords fought for was lost on the battlefield, rumors that SC-11-90 or SC-12-90 may be the Jeffords flag persist.



near the Wheatfield. Color Corporal Charles Phelps was killed, color guard member William H. Plummer was wounded in the leg, and Sergeant Edwin G. Tripp was wounded by five rebel bullets and died shortly after.²⁸ So, what happened to the flag that so many of these men fought and died for? Campbell and Seage agree it was torn to pieces and lost on the field of battle. Campbell said that “our flag was lost, said to have been torn to pieces in the general melee,”²⁹ The unnamed officer/correspondent to *The Detroit Free Press* agreed, “It was found that we had lost the United States colors drawn from the government last winter.”³⁰ Today, two fragmentary national flags ([SC-11-90](#) and [SC-12-90](#)) of the Fourth survive in the Capitol Battle Flag Collection. While some would like to believe that one or the other may in fact be the Jeffords flag, all first-hand accounts of the action around the colors render this impossible.

The Fourth had suffered substantial losses even before the devastation at Gettysburg. Nevertheless, they fought on and Campbell procured yet another flag – the regiment’s third – to replace the one just lost. “This time,” he recalled, “the American eagle surrounded with stars upon a blue field.”³¹ Campbell also tells of what happened to this flag in its first battle. “This flag received its baptism at the battle of the Wilderness, where a shot smashed the head of one of the color guards and threw his blood and brains upon the flag and into the face of the color-bearer.”³² It was also at the battle of the Wilderness, in May 1864, that the Fourth lost its third colonel, George



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Lumbard, who was killed while leading the regiment.^{[33](#)}

On June 19, 1864, the Fourth's term of enlistment ended and the regiment returned home to Michigan for an all-too-brief veteran's furlough. One hundred twenty-nine veterans reenlisted, while the rest of the regiment, some two hundred eighty men, consolidated with the First Michigan Infantry.^{[34](#)} Then, on July 4th, 1864, the ladies of Adrian invited the regiment back to the city.

It was a hot and sultry day and Adrian was thronged with people. Governor Blair was there and spoke to the crowd, appealing for volunteers to fill the ranks of Michigan's battle-torn and sadly reduced regiments. The Fourth was late, so more speeches were delivered. Finally, accompanied by cheers and escorted by the mayor, the fire department, and various dignitaries, the regiment appeared – one hundred twenty men bearing a ragged banner.^{[35](#)} It was a pitiful contrast to the brave show of only three years before.

According to newspaper accounts, the regiment was there specifically to return the flag originally entrusted to them by the ladies of Adrian, "to be disposed of as the ladies may see fit."^{[36](#)} If the flag mentioned was the regiment's original "Defend It" flag, this seems to contradict accounts that the flag had already been returned. Perhaps the flag had been retired, sent home to Michigan, and held in safekeeping in another location to await the regiment's return.

There were more speeches and three cheers for the old flag. *The Hillsdale Standard* described the scene:

Sergeant Goodsell then proceeded to the platform, with the old banner, two thirds remaining, covered with smoke and dust. It swayed back and forth in the breeze, a fit emblem of the skeleton regiment that stood below. Its tattered appearance told a terrible story of the war.^{[37](#)}

Chaplain Seage then presented the banner to Mrs. Wilcox, who had been selected to receive it, "with great appropriateness," noted the *Hudson Gazette*, "for we believe she is the lady who originally made the presentation to the regiment."^{[38](#)} Mrs. Wilcox

received the flag with a few brief words, saying simply that the men had kept their trust and their reward and their monument would be the nations undying gratitude.

Only two weeks after this ceremony, several Michigan papers reported that some of the discharged men from the Fourth Michigan were attempting to reorganize the regiment. Their efforts succeeded and the reorganized Fourth was placed under the command of Colonel Jarius Hall.^{[39](#)} The regiment soon left for Nashville. It would take nearly a year for the men who were attached to the First to rejoin their



Chaplain John Seage



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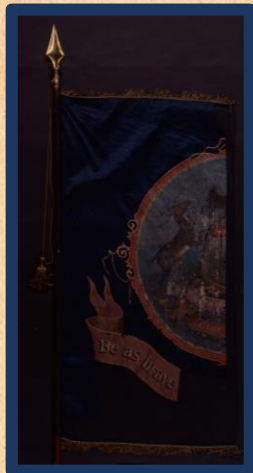


comrades with the Fourth.⁴⁰

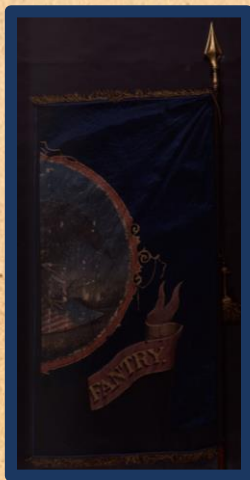
The end of the war found the regiment bound, not for home, but for San Antonio, Texas, traveling first by steamship and then via a grueling overland march. The Fourth, performing provost duty at San Antonio, found conditions so bad that many died of disease. It was not until June 1866 that the regiment was finally allowed to return to Detroit.

When Michigan regiments were asked to return their battle flags to the state in July 1866, the Fourth presented two flags (SC-11-90 and SC-13-90), today identified by brass plaques affixed to their staffs.

There are some conflicting reports about the identity of SC-13-90. In 1902, Robert Campbell stated that the third flag of the regiment, which was procured after Gettysburg, was on display



SC-13-90



in the Michigan State Capitol. He also stated that the third flag was a blue regimental, with the “American eagle surrounded with stars.”⁴¹ SC-13-90 is the only blue regimental belonging to the Fourth in the collection. However, the flag appears to be a custom produced, costly presentation flag. It is

unlikely that Quartermaster Campbell simply “procured” it. Campbell may have misidentified the flag in the Capitol or his recollections of the appearance and history of the flag may be in error. There is another telling detail about this flag that may shed some light on the mystery. The inscription on the flag plaque states that the flag is from the “4th Michigan New Organization.” Since new flags were often presented to regiments when they reorganized, perhaps the “Ladies of Adrian” finally redeemed their pledge and presented this one to the Fourth when it reorganized in Adrian on July 26, 1864.

One flag that was not presented at the flag return ceremony was the “Defend It” flag. Instead, it stayed with Mrs. Wilcox, who, for many years, periodically forwarded “the dear old flag” to the Fourth for display at reunions. Veterans came long distances to see the banner which so powerfully evoked the war.

In June 1876, Lt. L. Salsbury attended such a reunion in Hudson, Michigan.⁴² He said:

There is the flag. It is mute as the grave, but it tells . . . whether the oath those boys . . . took in that open field was supplemented by deeds; it tells whether the promise of the lamented Woodbury was redeemed. O, the dreadful fields of battle over which it has waved! O, the gallant souls that have poured out their life’s blood beneath its folds! Its pitiful tatters indicate the number, but they tell not their names; but those names are embalmed in our memories and shall never be forgotten.⁴³

On June 19, 1884, 101 veterans gathered in Jonesville, Michigan. Again, the flag was there. H. W. Magee, who had come from Chicago, was called to carry the flag to the front of the speakers platform. “As his lips trembled with emotion and his eyes grew moist with tears,”



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wrote an onlooker, “he grasped it and bore it to the front of the platform, where for a moment he paused and finally said, ‘Boys, do you see that flag? How it talks!’”[44](#)

The flag remained in Mrs. Wilcox’s able custody until a least 1893. Eventually, the flag was passed to the remaining members of the regiment for safekeeping. In 1898, the flag was displayed in the law office of Lester Salsbury in Hudson, Michigan. By 1900, Major James Cole had possession of the flag at his home and in a bank vault for safekeeping. Major Cole eventually handed the flag over to the State of Michigan in 1901.[45](#) When Robert Campbell spoke to the Washtenaw County Pioneer society in 1902, nearly forty years after the war, he remarked that the regiment’s first flag – the “Defend it” flag – was now on display in the military museum in the Capitol at Lansing.[46](#)



Local Militia Units

Before the Civil War, many communities boasted local militia groups. Although these local militia units were often more social than military in nature, the companies that made up early Michigan Civil War regiments consisted almost entirely of such militias. For example, the Dexter Union Guard, whose flag is seen above, became Company K of the Fourth Michigan Volunteer Infantry.[47](#) [SC-89-90](#) was presented to this company by the citizens of Dexter when it joined the regiment.



COLOR COMPANY THE FLAG BEARERS



By regulation, every infantry regiment was to be issued a stand of colors, consisting of two flags: a national (the familiar “Stars and Stripes”) and a regimental (similar to the Michigan state flag, except that Michigan’s coat-of-arms was usually replaced by the federal coat-of-arms, its outstretched eagle a powerful symbol of the Union the regiment was fighting to preserve). Measuring six and one half feet by six feet and borne on ten foot staffs, bearing the regiment’s name emblazoned in gold, and made of brilliant silk fringed and tasseled, these huge banners were designed to be easily seen and instantly recognized by every man of the regiment.

One company (approximately 100 men) was designated as the color company and was charged with the primary responsibility of guarding and carrying the flags into battle. From within the color company, the color bearers (who were most often noncommissioned officers) were selected for their military bearing, their exemplary moral character—and their bravery. The color company was placed in the center of the battle line and set the pace and direction of the regiment, with hundreds of men “guiding on the colors.” During the noise, confusion and smoke of battle, the flags were in the thick of the action. Men caught up in the melee looked to their colors to maintain their position and to prevent becoming separated from their regiment. Thus, the size and brilliance of the flags is easily understood: they had to be highly visible and instantly identifiable. Held aloft where all could see them, flags rallied the regiment in moments of confusion and despair and infused them with renewed determination.

Both Union and Confederate flags became instant targets of fierce enemy fire as each side realized that the simplest way to demoralize and disorient an opposing regiment was to shoot down its flag—or the person carrying it. The greatest casualties of the war both north and south—were suffered by those who carried the flags in battle. It was not unusual for a flag to be shot to tatters in a single engagement, its staff struck and shattered, and bearer after bearer killed or wounded. Every member of the color company—and, indeed, every member of the regiment— was expected to sacrifice his life, if necessary, to prevent the loss of the regiment’s flags in battle. Unimaginable acts of heroism were associated with their defense. The loss of a flag to the enemy meant humiliation and disgrace for the regiment. Conversely, capturing an enemy flag brought honor and fame. The Medal of Honor was instituted during the Civil War to honor Union troops for acts of extreme bravery. Sixty-nine Michigan men eventually received the medal—most through petition long after the war was over—for a variety of heroic actions. Only thirteen received it during the war, all for the capture of an enemy flag.





COLOR COMPANY THE FLAG BEARERS



The following individuals can be documented as having served in the regiment's color guard or were documented as having carried the flag. Their names appear in the Civil War Service Records Collection at the Archives of Michigan and on the Seeking Michigan website

<http://seekingmichigan.org/discover/civil-war-service-records>

Orvey S. Barrett "Lenawee County. Enlisted in company B, Fourth Infantry, as Sergeant, June 20, 1861, at Adrian, for 3 years, age 26. Mustered June 20, 1861. First Sergeant. Second Lieutenant Sept. 1, 1862. Mustered Feb. 28, 1863. Wounded in action at Gettysburg, Pa., July 2, 1863. Commanding company Feb., 1864. Discharged for disability May 23, 1864, on account of wounds received in action. Died Feb. 11, 1892." [48](#)

William Cranston "Lenawee County. Enlisted in company K, Fourth Infantry, May 16, 1861, at Union Hill, for 3 years. Mustered June 20, 1861. Transferred to company G. Jan. 1, 1861. Color bearer. On detached service with company G, First Infantry, by order July 2, 1864. Transferred to company C, Fourth Infantry, July 1, 1865. Deserted at New Orleans, La., June 25, 1865." [49](#)

Harrison Daniels "Lenawee County. Enlisted in company G, Fourth Infantry, June 20, 1861, at Adrian, for 3 years, age 24. Mustered June 20, 1861. Mustered out at expiration of term of service at Detroit, Mich., June 20, 1864. Present residence, Tecumseh, Mich." [50](#)

Dewitt C. Farrar "St. Clair. Enlisted in company B, Fourth Infantry, June 20, 1861, at Adrian, for 3 years, age 22. Mustered June 20, 1861. Corporal. Color Guard. Killed in action at Fredericksburg, Va., Dec 14, 1862." [51](#)

George A. Goodsell "Lenawee County. Enlisted in company F, Fourth Infantry, as Corporal, June 20, 1861, at Adrian, for 3 years, age 25. Mustered June 20, 1861. Wounded and in hospital, 1863. Sergeant July 1, 186. First Sergeant March 7, 1863. Mustered out at expiration of terms of service at Detroit, Mich., June 29, 1864." [52](#)



Orvey S. Barrett



COLOR COMPANY THE FLAG BEARERS



Harrison H. Jeffords "Dexter. Entered service in company K, Fourth Infantry, at organization as First Lieutenant, June 20, 1861, at Adrian, for 3 years, age 24. Commissioned to date May 16, 1861. Mustered June 20, 1861. Commissioned Captain, company C, May 1, 1862. Mustered May 1, 1862. Commissioned Colonel Nov. 26, 1862. Mustered March 12, 1863. Died July 3, 1863, at Gettysburg, Pa., of wounds received in action July 2, 1863." [53](#)

William H. Loveland "Enlisted in company D, Fourth Infantry, as Sergeant, June 20, 1861, at Adrian, for 3 years, age 21. Mustered June 20, 1861. Sergeant Major Jan. 10, 1862. Commissioned First Lieutenant, Company D, Sept. 10, 1862. Commissioned Captain, company B, Sept. 10, 1862. Died May 31, 1864, of wounds received in action at Wilderness, Va., May 5, 1864." [54](#)

Cornelius Paulding "Monroe City. Enlisted in company A, Fourth Infantry, as Sergeant, June 20, 1861, at Adrian, for 3 years, age 20. Mustered June 20, 1861. Color Sergeant. Died of disease at Washington, Aug. 12, 1861." [55](#)

Charles W. Phelps "Washtenaw County. Enlisted in company D, Fourth Infantry, May 16, 1861, at Ann Arbor, for 3 years, age 21. Mustered June 20, 1861. Killed in action at Gettysburg, Pa., July 2, 1863." [56](#)

William H. Plummer "Washtenaw County. Enlisted in company G, Fourth Infantry, June 20, 1861, at Adrian, for 3 years, age 21. Mustered June 20, 1861. Wounded in action at Gettysburg, Pa., July 2, 1863. Corporal. Mustered out at expiration of term of service at Detroit, Mich., June 30, 1864. Present residence, Lansing, Mich." [57](#)

Henry Seage "Hillsdale County. Enlisted in company E, Fourth Infantry, Sept. 27, 1861, at Hudson, for 3 years. Mustered Oct. 8, 1861. On detached service with company K, First Infantry, by order, July 2, 1864, Petersburg, Va. Corporal. Discharged at expiration of the term of service near Petersburg, Va., Sept. 10, 1864. Was in the following battles: New Bridge, Siege of Yorktown, Mechanicsville, Gaines' Mill, Hanover Court House, Malvern Hill, Second Bull Run, Antietam, Shepardstown Ford, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, Rappahannock, Mine Run, Wilderness, Laurel Hill, Spottsylvania [sic] Court House, and North Anna River. Died April 8, 1899. Buried at Lansing, Mich." [58](#)



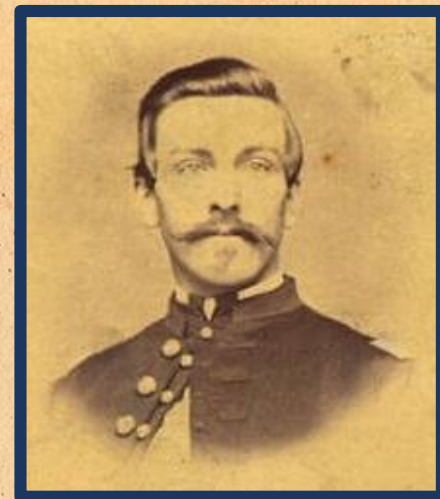
COLOR COMPANY THE FLAG BEARERS



Richard Watson Seage “(Veteran) White Pigeon. Enlisted in company E, Fourth Infantry, as Corporal, June 20, 1861, at Adrian for 3 years, age 23. Mustered June 20, 1861. Sergeant. Wounded in action at Malvern Hill, VA., July 1, 1862. Sergeant Major Dec. 13, 1862. Commissioned Second Lieutenant, company I, April 1, 1863. Mustered to date May 22, 1863. Honorably discharged Dec. 31, 1863, for disability, on account of wounds received in action at Gettysburg, Pa., July 2, 1863. Re-entered services as Regimental Quartermaster, reorganized Fourth Infantry, Aug. 2, 1864. Commissioned to date July 26, 1864. Mustered Aug. 31, 1864. Discharged for disability March 6, 1865, by S. O. No. 59, War Department. Brevet Captain U. S. Volunteers, March 13, 1865, for gallant and meritorious services during the war.”[59](#)

Thomas Tarsney “(Veteran) Ransom. Enlisted in company E, Fourth Infantry, Oct. 8, 1861, for 3 years. Mustered Oct. 8, 1861. Re-enlisted Dec. 29, 1863. Mustered Jan. 1, 1864. Corporal. Wounded in action May 5, 1864. On detached services with company K, First Infantry, by order, July 2, 1864. Transferred to company C, Fourth Infantry, July 1, 1865. First Sergeant July 1, 1865. Discharged to date Feb. 15, 1866.”[60](#)

William L. Tenbrook “(Veteran), Adrian. Enlisted in company B, Fourth Infantry as Musician, June 20, 1861, at Adrian, for 3 years, age 22. Mustered June 20, 1861. Discharged for disability Sept. 3, 1861. Re-entered service Dec. 5, 1861. Re-enlisted Dec. 29, 1863. Mustered Jan. 1, 1864. Corporal July 1, 1862. Sergeant July, 1862. Wounded in action May 5, 1864. On detached service with company B, First Infantry, by order, July 2, 1864, Petersburg, Va. Discharged to accept promotion Sept. 27, 1864. Commissioned First Lieutenant, company A, Fourth Infantry, July 26, 1864. Mustered Sept. 14, 1864. Discharged to accept promotion March 4, 1865. Commissioned Captain Feb. 9, 1865. Mustered March 5, 1865. Mustered out and honorably discharged to date Feb. 13, 1866.”[61](#)



William Tenbrook



COLOR COMPANY THE FLAG BEARERS



James Terwilliger "Hillsdale County. Enlisted in company E, Fourth Infantry, Oct. 5, 1861, at Hillsdale, for 3 years. Mustered Oct. 8, 1861. Killed in action at the Wilderness, Va., May 5, 1864." [62](#)

Edwin G. Tripp "Mosherville. Enlisted in company H, Fourth Infantry, June 20, 1861, at Adrian, for 3 years, age 19. Mustered June 20, 1861. Sergeant Jan. 1, 1863. Died in First Division Fifth Corps Hospital, Gettysburg, Pa., July 5, 1863, of wounds received in action July 2, 1863." [63](#)

Freeman N. [P.] Worden "St. Joseph County. Enlisted in company C, Fourth Infantry, June 20, 1861, at Adrian, for 3 years, age 29. Mustered June 20, 1861. Killed in battle of Gettysburg, Pa., July 2, 1863." [64](#)

Reorganized

Daniel M. Jones "Enlisted in company H, Fourth Infantry, Sept. 19, 1864, at Armada, for 3 years, age 20. Mustered Sept. 21, 1864. Color Guard. Corporal Oct. 5, 1864. Sergeant May 1, 1866. Mustered out at Houston, Texas, May 26, 1866." [65](#)

James H. Thiell "Hillsdale. Enlisted in company A, Fourth Infantry, July 27, 1864, at Hillsdale, for 3 years, age 19. Mustered Aug. 16, 1864. Sergeant Sept. 2, 1864. Color Guard Nov., 1864. First Sergeant March 5, 1865. Commissioned Second Lieutenant Oct. 24, 1865. Mustered out and honorably discharged at Houston, Texas, May 26, 1866." [66](#)

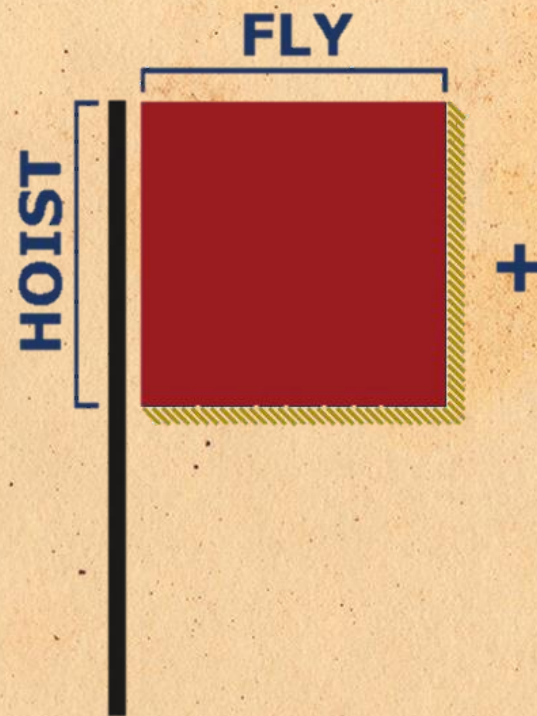


THE FLAGS



Note on Measurements: All dimensions give the height of the flag (called the “hoist” and measured along the staff side of the flag) first, followed by the width (called the “fly” and measured from the outside edge of the sleeve to the flag’s free edge). Measurements exclude the fringe, which is measured separately. All measurements are in inches. A plus symbol (+) following a measurement means the flag is fragmentary and once extended further in that direction.

Note on Catalogue Numbers: “**SC**” refers to the State Capitol (the flags are State Capitol artifacts). The two-digit number at the end refers to the year the flags were catalogued and accessioned by the Michigan Historical Museum.





THE FLAGS



SC-10-90: *Silk national.* ▪ Dimensions: 65"x75" ▪ Silk Fringe: 3"

The flag is a thirty-four star national. The five pointed stars are white fabric applique arranged in a rectangular pattern. Several of the stars are missing, but judging from the remaining stars and voids, they were arranged in six rows, with six stars in the first, third, fourth, and sixth row and five stars in the second and fifth rows. The motto, "THE LADIES OF ADRIAN/TO THE/4TH REGIMENT/Defend it" appears on four red stripes. The hollow block letter of "THE LADIES OF ADRIAN" are formed by a double line of gold braid sewn with a running stitch. The letters are filled by silver sequins, sewn on by hand. The letters of "4TH REGIMENT" are formed by hollow cursive letters with a single line of gold braid filled by sequins. The word "Defend" is in a cursive font. The flag has gold fringe on three sides, though it is likely that this fringe was added during conservation efforts during the 1960s as there is little loss and it does not appear to be consistent with the rest of the flag or with period fringe. Fabric on the hoist was fashioned into a sleeve for attachment to the staff.

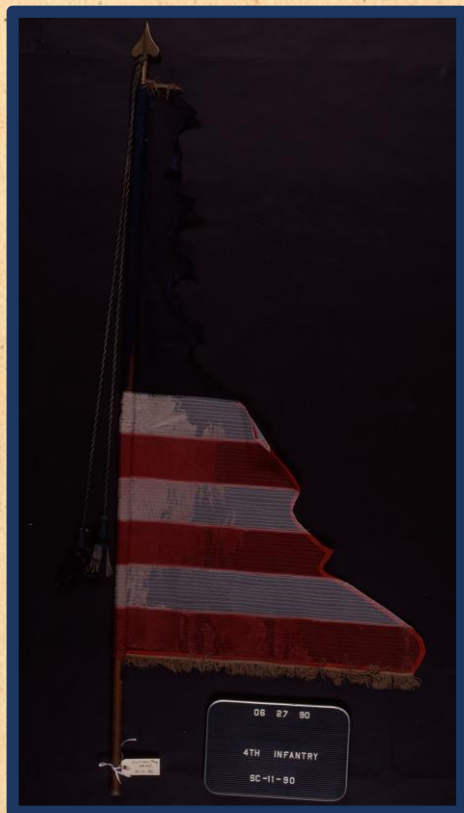
The staff, which measures 100" long x 1.25" in diameter is intact and a gilt painted wooden ball serves as a finial. A silver presentation plaque on the staff reads, "The Old Fourth Mich. Infantry 1861-1864." Numerous references indicate that the original staff was shattered, so the staff accompanying SC-10-90 is likely a replacement staff, acquired after the war to allow the flag to be carried and displayed at reunions.

No cords or tassels remain.

The flag was netted (sewn between layers of dyed nylon net) in the 1960s in an early attempt at conservation.



THE FLAGS



SC-11-90: *Silk national.* ▪ *Dimensions: 71.5"x39.5+"* ▪ *Silk Fringe: 2.25"*

The flag is very fragmentary. It is a national, but the canton is so fragmentary that there is no way of knowing whether this was an early war (34 star) or late war (35 star) flag. A small amount of gold fringe remains on the bottom of the flag. Fabric on the hoist was fashioned into a sleeve for attachment to the staff.

The staff, which measures 97.5" long x 1.5" in diameter, has a spade finial. A brass plaque on the staff reads, "4th Mich. Infantry," indicating this flag was one of those returned to the state in 1866.

The flag has a blue and white twisted silk cord that measures 134" long and the two 2.25" tassels are formed on wooden cores.

The flag was netted (sewn between layers of dyed nylon net) in the 1960s in an early attempt at conservation.



THE FLAGS



SC-12-90: *Silk national.* ▪ Dimensions: 69"x72.5" ▪ Silk Fringe: 2.5"

The flag has five pointed painted stars arranged in two concentric ovals; however, there is too much loss in the canton to determine if this is an early war (34 star) or late war (35 star) flag. Flags with this oval pattern typically had an outer oval of twenty stars, an inner oval of ten stars, one star in each corner, and one in the middle for a 35 star flag. For a 34 star flag, the middle star is omitted. There is gold fringe on the outer edge of the flag, but the fringe on the fly edge appears to be a more recent replacement as it does not match the rest of the flag's fringe. Fabric on the hoist was fashioned into a sleeve for attachment to the staff.

The staff measures 96" long x 1.25" in diameter. There is no plaque on the staff, but a penciled inscription, possibly reading "Tanners Flag," appears halfway down the shaft in an area once covered by the sleeve. The finial and finial base are missing.

The flag has a blue and white twisted silk cord that measures 156" long and the two 2.5" tassels are formed on wooden cores.

The flag was netted (sewn between layers of dyed nylon net) in the 1960s in an early attempt at conservation.



THE FLAGS



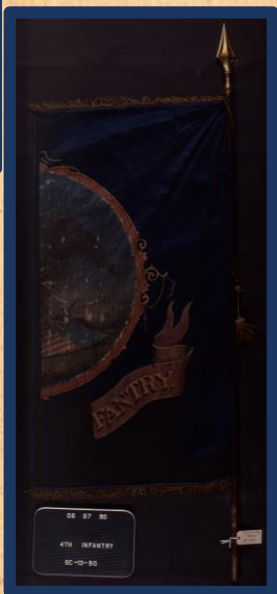
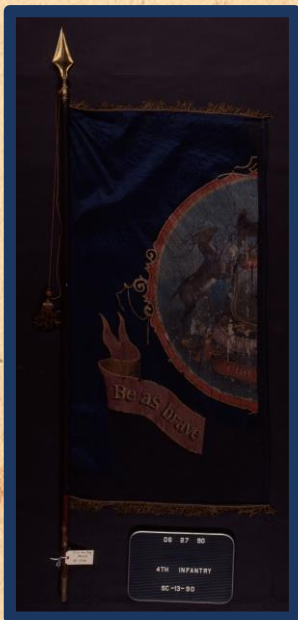
SC-13-90: *Silk regimental.* ■ Dimensions: 66.25"x35+" ■ Gold Bullion Fringe: 2"

Half of the flag is missing. The two-sided flag (a flag with decorations painted or sewn on both sides) is made of a single piece of silk. This is unusual as most two-sided flags were made of two pieces of silk so that painted or stitched decorations would not show on the opposite side. The flag features the Michigan coat-of-arms on the front. Under the coat of arms is part of a motto, "Be as brave". The rest of the motto has been lost. The obverse features the federal coat-of-arms. Under the federal coat-of-arms is the regiment's designation, though the only remaining word is "Infantry". The flag has gold bullion fringe on three sides and the fabric on the hoist was fashioned into a sleeve for attachment to the staff.

The staff measures 98" long x 2" in diameter. A brass plaque on the staff reads, "4th Mich. Infantry New Organization," indicating it is one of the two flags the Fourth returned to the state in 1866. The staff retains its slotted brass ferrule on the butt – it was not cut off to fit in the Capitol cases as were so many of the others staffs returned in 1866. A non-regulation spear finial surmounts the staff, and a narrow brass ring circles the staff near its lower end.

The flag has a green and gold twisted cord made of metal-wrapped cotton, measuring 82" long, and a single green and gold tassel formed on a wooden core.

The flag was netted (sewn between layers of dyed nylon net) in the 1960s in an early attempt at conservation.





THE FLAGS



SC-89-90: *Silk national. ▪ Dimensions: 52.25"x64.5" ▪ Gold Braid*

Smaller than regulation, this is not a regimental battle flag, although it is associated with the Fourth. The designation, "Dexter Union Guards," and the motto, "Death to Traitors," are painted on the obverse in the canton. The reverse is blank. Thirty-one cloth stars covered in silver sequins and silver wire decorations are sewn to the flag above the motto. Since this is an early war flag, it would have originally had thirty-four stars, however some are missing because of loss. There is no fringe, but the flag is trimmed with gold braid. Some of the braid is missing. Fabric on the hoist was fashioned into a sleeve for attachment to the staff.

The staff measures 97.5" long x 1.5" in diameter. The staff has no plaque, indicating that the flag was not returned to the state in 1866. The inscription "Dexter Union Guards" is painted on the butt of the staff and the staff is painted gold below the area covered by the sleeve. The finial is an unusual hatchet and spear, painted black.

Not tassels or cords remain.

The flag is not netted.

This is believed to be one of few examples of a community-based militia flag in the collection. The citizens of Dexter provided this flag when the Dexter Union Guard joined the Fourth Michigan Infantry as Company K. The role of this flag in the war is unknown.



PHOTOGRAPHS



"Barrett, Orvey" c. 1861-1865. From Archives of Michigan: Seeking Michigan: *Civil War Photographs Collection*.
<http://seekingmichigan.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/p4006coll3/id/1003/rec/1> (accessed May 11, 2018).

Glendenning, Peter, photographer. "[SC-10-90](#)" c. 1990. State of Michigan: *Save the Flags Collection*.

Glendenning, Peter, photographer. "[SC-11-90](#)" c. 1990. State of Michigan: *Save the Flags Collection*.

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Glendenning, Peter, photographer. "[SC-13-90 Front](#)" c. 1990. State of Michigan: *Save the Flags Collection*.

Glendenning, Peter, photographer. "[SC-13-90 Back](#)" c. 1990. State of Michigan: *Save the Flags Collection*.

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"Jeffords, Harrison H." c. 1861-1863. From Wikimedia Commons.
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"Seage, Henry" Steve Roberts Family Photos (Great-great-grandson of Richard Seage)

"Seage, John" Steve Roberts Family Photos (Great-great-grandson of Richard Seage)

"Seage, Richard" Steve Roberts Family Photos (Great-great-grandson of Richard Seage)

"Tenbrook, William" c. 1864-1866. From Archives of Michigan: Seeking Michigan: *Civil War Photographs Collection*.
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<http://www.4thmichigan.com/photographs.htm> (accessed May 15, 2018)



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“Woodbury, Dwight” c. 1861-1863. From Archives of Michigan: Seeking Michigan: *Civil War Photographs Collection*. <http://seekingmichigan.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/p4006coll3/id/1142/rec/3> (accessed May 11, 2018).



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- (1) "The Remnant of the Fourth Michigan—Return of the Battle Flag," *The Hudson Gazette*, July 9, 1864.
- (2) John Robertson, *Michigan In the War* (Lansing: W. S. George and Co. State Printers and Binders, 1882), 220.
- (3) John Robertson, Adjutant General of Michigan during the Civil War lists the militia's name as Dexter Union Guard. Their flag, however, reads "Dexter Union Guards".
- (4) Robertson, *Michigan in the War*, 222.
- (5) Ibid, 223.
- (6) Martin N. Bertera and Kim Crawford, *The 4th Michigan Infantry in the Civil War* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2010), 13.
- (7) "The Fourth Regiment: Presentation of a Banner: Full Report of the Proceedings and Speeches," *Adrian Daily Expositor*, June 22, 1861.
- (8) *Detroit Free Press*, June 23, 1861.
- (9) "The Fourth Regiment: Presentation of a Banner: Full Report of the Proceedings and Speeches," *Adrian Daily Expositor*, June 22, 1861.
- (10) Bertera and Crawford, *The 4th Michigan Infantry*, 90.
- (11) Robertson, *Michigan in the War*, 226.
- (12) Ibid, 227.
- (13) Bertera and Crawford, *The 4th Michigan Infantry*, 92.
- (14) Robert Campbell, "Pioneer Memories of the War Days of 1861-65." in *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society Collections* Vol 30. (Lansing: Wynkoop, Hallenbeck, Crawford Co. State Printers, 1906) 567.
- (15) "The Tattered Flag of the Fourth Regiment. An Appeal to the Ladies," *Adrian Daily Watchtower*, January 27, 1863.



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[\(16\)](#) *Detroit Advertiser and Tribune*, February, 10 1863.

[\(17\)](#) Campbell, *Pioneer Memories*, 567.

[\(18\)](#) *Ann Arbor Journal*, May 8, 1863.

[\(19\)](#) Campbell, *Pioneer Memories*, 567-8.

[\(20\)](#) Edward H.C. Taylor Letters, Michigan Historical Collections, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI.

[\(21\)](#) Campbell, *Pioneer Memories*, 568.

[\(22\)](#) Bertera and Crawford, *The 4th Michigan Infantry*, 161-64.

[\(23\)](#) Seage to Bachelder, Sept. 23, 1884, in Ladd and Ladd, *The Bachelder Papers* vol. 2, p 1070-72, qtd. in Bertera and Crawford, *The 4th Michigan Infantry*, 166.

[\(24\)](#) Ibid.

[\(25\)](#) "From the Fourth Infantry: How it Happened the Regiment was so Badly Cut Up at Gettysburg," *Detroit Free Press*, August 4, 1863.

[\(26\)](#) Seage to Bachelder, Sept. 23, 1884, in Ladd and Ladd, *The Bachelder Papers* vol. 2, p 1070-72, qtd. in Bertera and Crawford, *The 4th Michigan Infantry*, 166.

[\(27\)](#) Bertera and Crawford, *The 4th Michigan Infantry*, 167.

[\(28\)](#) Ibid, 166.

[\(29\)](#) Campbell, *Pioneer Memories*, 571.

[\(30\)](#) "From the Fourth Infantry: How it Happened the Regiment was so Badly Cut Up at Gettysburg," *Detroit Free Press*, August 4, 1863.



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[\(31\)](#) Campbell, *Pioneer Memories*, 571.

[\(32\)](#) Ibid., 571

[\(33\)](#) Robertson, *Michigan in the War*, 230.

[\(34\)](#) Ibid., 231.

[\(35\)](#) Bertera and Crawford, *The 4th Michigan Infantry*, 230.

[\(36\)](#) "The Remnant of the Fourth Michigan – Return of the Battle Flag," *The Hudson Gazette*, July 9, 1864.

[\(37\)](#) *Hillsdale Standard*, July 12, 1864.

[\(38\)](#) "The Remnant of the Fourth Michigan – Return of the Battle Flag," *The Hudson Gazette*, July 9, 1864.

[\(39\)](#) Bertera and Crawford, *The 4th Michigan Infantry*, 232.

[\(40\)](#) Ibid., p. 233.

[\(41\)](#) Campbell, *Pioneer Memories*, 571.

[\(42\)](#) *The Hudson Gazette* lists L. Salsbury's rank as lieutenant. There is a Lester H. Salsbury listed in the *Record of Service of Michigan Volunteers in the Civil War*, but he is listed as a corporal who was promoted to a sergeant. The article in *The Hudson Gazette* was written a decade after the end of the war. Either Salsbury continued in the military and had achieved the rank of lieutenant by the time the article was written, or the reporter was mistaken about his rank.

[\(43\)](#) "Fourth Michigan Reunion," *The Hudson Gazette*, June 22, 1876.

[\(44\)](#) A. E. Haynes, "The Thirteenth Annual Reunion of the Old Fourth Michigan," *The Veteran*, Vol 20, June 20, 1884.

[\(45\)](#) Bertera and Crawford, *The 4th Michigan Infantry*, 255.

[\(46\)](#) Campbell, *Pioneer Memories*, 571.

[\(47\)](#) Robertson, *Michigan in the War*, 223.



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[\[48\]](#) Michigan, Adjutant-General's Dept., *Record of Service of Michigan Volunteers in the Civil War, 1861-1865*. Vol. 4 of 46 (Kalamazoo: Ihling bros. and Everard, 190-), 10.

[\[49\]](#) Michigan, Adjutant-General's Dept., *Record of Service of Michigan Volunteers in the Civil War, 1861-1865*. Vol. 4 of 46 (Kalamazoo: Ihling bros. and Everard, 190-), 31.

[\[50\]](#) Michigan, Adjutant-General's Dept., *Record of Service of Michigan Volunteers in the Civil War, 1861-1865*. Vol. 4 of 46 (Kalamazoo: Ihling bros. and Everard, 190-), 33.

[\[51\]](#) Michigan, Adjutant-General's Dept., *Record of Service of Michigan Volunteers in the Civil War, 1861-1865*. Vol. 4 of 46 (Kalamazoo: Ihling bros. and Everard, 190-), 41.

[\[52\]](#) Michigan, Adjutant-General's Dept., *Record of Service of Michigan Volunteers in the Civil War, 1861-1865*. Vol. 4 of 46 (Kalamazoo: Ihling bros. and Everard, 190-), 49.

[\[53\]](#) Michigan, Adjutant-General's Dept., *Record of Service of Michigan Volunteers in the Civil War, 1861-1865*. Vol. 4 of 46 (Kalamazoo: Ihling bros. and Everard, 190-), 61.

[\[54\]](#) Michigan, Adjutant-General's Dept., *Record of Service of Michigan Volunteers in the Civil War, 1861-1865*. Vol. 4 of 46 (Kalamazoo: Ihling bros. and Everard, 190-), 70.

[\[55\]](#) Michigan, Adjutant-General's Dept., *Record of Service of Michigan Volunteers in the Civil War, 1861-1865*. Vol. 4 of 46 (Kalamazoo: Ihling bros. and Everard, 190-), 86.

[\[56\]](#) Michigan, Adjutant-General's Dept., *Record of Service of Michigan Volunteers in the Civil War, 1861-1865*. Vol. 4 of 46 (Kalamazoo: Ihling bros. and Everard, 190-), 88.

[\[57\]](#) Michigan, Adjutant-General's Dept., *Record of Service of Michigan Volunteers in the Civil War, 1861-1865*. Vol. 4 of 46 (Kalamazoo: Ihling bros. and Everard, 190-), 89.

[\[58\]](#) Michigan, Adjutant-General's Dept., *Record of Service of Michigan Volunteers in the Civil War, 1861-1865*. Vol. 4 of 46 (Kalamazoo: Ihling bros. and Everard, 190-), 98.



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- [\[59\]](#) Michigan, Adjutant-General's Dept., *Record of Service of Michigan Volunteers in the Civil War, 1861-1865*. Vol. 4 of 46 (Kalamazoo: Ihling bros. and Everard, 190-), 98.
- [\[60\]](#) Michigan, Adjutant-General's Dept., *Record of Service of Michigan Volunteers in the Civil War, 1861-1865*. Vol. 4 of 46 (Kalamazoo: Ihling bros. and Everard, 190-), 107.
- [\[61\]](#) Michigan, Adjutant-General's Dept., *Record of Service of Michigan Volunteers in the Civil War, 1861-1865*. Vol. 4 of 46 (Kalamazoo: Ihling bros. and Everard, 190-), 108-9.
- [\[62\]](#) Michigan, Adjutant-General's Dept., *Record of Service of Michigan Volunteers in the Civil War, 1861-1865*. Vol. 4 of 46 (Kalamazoo: Ihling bros. and Everard, 190-), 109.
- [\[63\]](#) Michigan, Adjutant-General's Dept., *Record of Service of Michigan Volunteers in the Civil War, 1861-1865*. Vol. 4 of 46 (Kalamazoo: Ihling bros. and Everard, 190-), 111.
- [\[64\]](#) Michigan, Adjutant-General's Dept., *Record of Service of Michigan Volunteers in the Civil War, 1861-1865*. Vol. 4 of 46 (Kalamazoo: Ihling bros. and Everard, 190-), 125.
- [\[65\]](#) Michigan, Adjutant-General's Dept., *Record of Service of Michigan Volunteers in the Civil War, 1861-1865*. Vol. 4 of 46 (Kalamazoo: Ihling bros. and Everard, 190-), 163.
- [\[66\]](#) Michigan, Adjutant-General's Dept., *Record of Service of Michigan Volunteers in the Civil War, 1861-1865*. Vol. 4 of 46 (Kalamazoo: Ihling bros. and Everard, 190-), 189.